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N.B.—All Communications should reach the Editor, Ardeevin, Cadogan Park, Belfast, not later than the 16th of the month preceding publication.

"Peace and Good-will."

Despite past disillusionment, and the disquieting nature of many present facts, we need to make ourselves susceptible to the spirit of the approaching Christmas season. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but to live without hope is to regard life as not worth living at all. Hence, we would again emphasise with all earnestness the Christian Message of Peace and Good-will.

But it is more than a seasonable sentiment. It is an inspiration and a challenge. How much it means and how deeply desirable its realisation is! Here in Ireland a new crisis has arisen and as yet we cannot see its issue. Yet we are on firm ground when we say that for Peace and Good-will to have a fair chance certain obvious factors are

essential. Breadth of view, largeness of sympathy, the perception of far-reaching principles—all these claim fitting place not only in the deliberations of our leaders but also in the counsels of the common people. Further, at a time when so much is at stake, a heavy responsibility rests upon the founders of public opinion. Appeals to party passion are easy and mischievous at all times—at a time like the present they are positively criminal and un-Christian.

As we write, grave news of the recurrence of rioting in Belfast reaches us. By whomsoever caused, this outbreak is deplorable, not only because of the terrible toll of lives, but also because it creates an atmosphere utterly alien to the hearing and heeding of the Christian message. Not alone desolated homes but hearts filled with hatred and vengeful feelings are no fitting receptacles for the spirit of Peace and Good-will.

We cannot dissociate the significance of things near at hand from those far away. No thoughtful person can minimise the importance of the Washington Conference, whose successful conclusion will do a vast deal to determine the chances of Peace and Good-will in the world at large. Negatively, the limitation of armaments would create confidence and constitute an impressive object lesson. Positively, it would free much-needed capital for social reform, and would more and more concentrate attention upon the tasks of national and international amelioration and co-operation in well-doing. Practically, a tremendous step forward in the direction of Peace and Good-will is assured if the favourable auspices find realisation in agreed principles of international policy. God grant that the present opportunity may be utilised to the full!

Notes of the Month.

We would congratulate our congregations at All Souls' and Mountpottinger on the success attending their efforts to commemorate the services rendered by their members in the Great War. As will appear from the reports in another part of this issue, the Unveiling Ceremonies in each case passed off most impressively. Also, our friends at Grey Abbey have added to their resources for worship by the provision of an organ and its dedication at a Special Service last month. May similar success attend the endeavour of the Downpatrick congregation at their Bazaar on December 15th, details of which are given elsewhere.

It is a matter for general gratification that the Rev. E. H. Pickering is not to remain long without a suitable successor. One of his predecessors will now become his successor, when the Ordination of the Rev. E. I. Fripp to the ministry of All Souls' Church takes place. We congratulate the members of the latter on this arrangement, and most heartily welcome the new minister as a member of the Non-Subscribing Church of Ireland. In his former ministry he was in charge of an independent congregation. Now he comes into the Presbytery of Antrim, of which his congregation is to-day a most worthy and valuable member. Thus it follows that on December 1st he will receive Ordination by appointed members of the Presbytery of Antrim. But his formal admission into that Presbytery will have a speedy sequel, since on December 15th the Rev. Edgar Lockett will be duly installed as a member of the same body. In his case the earlier ministry at Banbridge was also a ministry within the organised Church, consequently Ordination was then received. We confidently expect, as we sincerely hope for, the happiest consequences from the re-settlement of these two earnest and able men amongst us.

* *

Great and widespread sympathy will go forth to our revered Moderator (the Rev. Alex. Gordon) and his family connection in the loss recently sustained by the death of Mr. T. H. Gordon. What the latter was to his relatives and

intimate friends no words of ours could tell and only the deepest feelings of their hearts can convey. But it was our privilege years ago to meet the deceased gentleman on various occasions and to realise his devotion to his own church of Dukinfield and his keen interest in the living issues of our faith everywhere. He had a distinguished period of active service as Town Clerk of Dukinfield, and well-earned the all-too-short period of retirement from professional duty. We would tender to his relations our deepest sympathy in their great loss.

* *

It would be remissness on our part if we allowed this monthly issue to appear without the expression of our heartiest good wishes for Christmas to all our readers. Despite the dark factors around, we strongly hope that the brightness and the joy of the Christmas season will freely enter their homes, uplift their hearts, nourish their hopes, and encourage all their Christian endeavours. As we ponder once again over the significance of the Festival which marks the birth of the Christ-child, may an increasing measure of His Spirit come to cheer and console us and make ever more fruitful all unselfish service for God and for man.

* *

With the present issue, the Lesson Notes, due chiefly to the labours of the Rev. E. H. Pickering, will come to an end so far as the plan for 1921 is concerned. But the Sunday School Committee are engaged on drawing up a Scheme of Lessons for next year, dealing with important periods and personages of the Old and New Testaments. This new scheme will soon be completed and the Lesson Notes based thereon will begin in our January issue. We have reason to believe that Sunday School teachers appreciate these series of lessons and make use of them in their class teaching. That is a strong reason for their continuance. But we hope that our readers generally find food for thought in this part of our printed pages. As a body we are often reproached with imperfect knowledge of its biblical literature. There would be less reason for that reproach if we read our Bibles more and made fullest use of the helps printed therefor.

Young People's Page

CHRISTMAS.

Last month we were thinking about Hallowe'en and some of the old customs connected with it, and now another feast is very near—Christmas Day, which we keep as the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ. This feast is kept universally by Christians, and not like Hallowe'en only in some places. No one can tell what day was really the birthday of Jesus, nor does it matter so long as we keep a day of rejoicing for his birth.

"Yule" is the old name for Christmas time; it is said to be derived from that of a pagan festival and is associated with the winter solstice. Yule-tide has been held as a sacred festival by numberless nations and tribes. For example:

Christians keep December 25th as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus.

The Chinese on December 25th celebrate the birth of Buddha.

The Druids at the winter solstice held the festival of "Nolagh."

The Greeks, at the winter solstice, celebrated the birth of Demeter, Dionysus and Herakles.

The Persians celebrated at the winter solstice the birth of Mithras.

The Romans celebrated on December 25th the festival "Natalis Solis Invicta."

A good many of the most popular Christmas customs are of German origin and many of these have been transferred from the festival of Saint Nicolas on December 6th to the Christmas feast on December 25th. "Santa Claus," "Santa Klaus" is a corrupt contraction of "Sankt Nikolaus" = Saint Nicolas, the patron saint of boys. The old custom was for some one on December 5th, the eve of the feast of Saint Nicolas, to dress up like a bishop and distribute small gifts to "good children"; this has now changed to December 24th, the eve of Christmas, when Santa Claus, or "Father Christmas," as we say, goes round the houses and fills good children's stockings with toys and sweets. The Dutch name for Santa Claus or Father Christmas, is "Kriss Kringle," or

"Krish-Kinkle," which seems to be a corruption of "Christ-Kindlein," or the Christ-Child. The "Christmas Box" originally was a small gratuity given to servants and others on the day after Christmas, hence called Boxing Day. Boxes were placed in the churches for alms and opened on Christmas Day and the priests distributed the contents of these boxes on Boxing Day calling it the dole of the Christmas box.

Christmas carols are sung in commemoration of the song of the angels to the shepherds. In some places children carry round a doll laid in a box to represent the infant Jesus in his manger-bed. It is said by some people that plum pudding is emblematical of the Wise Men's gifts, and that mince pies are to represent the manger in which Christ was laid. Plum puddings proper were only introduced into England in the early years of the eighteenth century, before that a plum porridge or pottage, was made with very strong beef broth.

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert celebrated Christmas in the German way by having a Christmas Tree and so set the fashion, and Christmas trees became general in this country. Christmas trees and Maypoles are said to be the remnants of the Scandinavian Ash, the "Tree of Time," whose roots penetrate to heaven.

Christmas took the place of the great feast of Saturn held in December, when the temples were decorated with evergreens; so Christians decorated their churches and homes in honour of Christ's birth. The holly, or "holy" tree, is dedicated to this use and is called "Christ's Thorn" in Germany and Scandinavia from its use in church decorations, and because its berries are ripe about Christmas time.

Till recently in the remoter parts of Devonshire it was believed that at midnight on Christmas Eve the cattle went down on their knees in adoration. Charles Dickens, by his beautiful little story, "A Christmas Carol," did a great deal to arouse in this country the spirit of "goodwill among men," which we love to see abroad at this season. It is a ghost story that everyone, young and old, should read at Christmas time.

Mountpottinger Unitarian Church.

WAR MEMORIAL UNVEILING.

At the conclusion of Morning Service on Sunday, November 13th, the Tablet to the memory of those connected with the congregation who fell and who served in the war was unveiled by Miss Maria Davidson.

The Tablet, which is of white marble mounted on a black plinth, bears the names of the following who fell:—Capt. James Samuel Davidson, Lieutenant Robert M'Calmont Pettigrew, Sergt. William Jones and Private Hugh Hanna; and those who served but returned safely:—Harold Beattie, Samuel Jones, Andrew Lawther, James M'Dowell, F. A. J. Davidson, Thomas Jones, Jas. Maxwell, N. B. Munn, M.C.; John Fitchie, F. B. Kennedy, John Maxwell, Hugh Orr, David Grant, J. M'V. Kennedy, Samuel Maxwell and Horace Steel.

The minister, Rev. M. Watkins, conducted the service and preached an appropriate sermon based on the words of Kipling's recessional hymn, "Lest we forget."

After the sermon, a number of ex-service men were lined up the aisle in front of the Memorial Tablet, and the congregation then joined in singing the National Anthem. The unveiling ceremony immediately followed, and was performed by Miss Davidson. Lieut. Norman B. Munn, M.C., read the names of the fallen, and Rev. M. Watkins the other names. The two trumpeters from the Somerset Light Infantry then sounded the "Last Post."

Addressing the congregation, Rev. M. Watkins referred individually to the fallen, and said Capt. Davidson was a man of high industrial honour, and well known in Belfast. A high sense of duty was a rare virtue among men, and the possessor of it invariably took a lofty place in the estimate of his fellows; but let them couple with it a delicate sense of honour and courage, and they came very near to the character of Capt.

Davidson. He was essentially a peaceful man, very much loved by those who knew him, yet he went forth voluntarily to take part in warfare, a business abhorrent to his nature. The story of his death reflected the greatest credit upon his life and memory. Wounded early in the day of the Big Push on the 1st of July, 1916, he returned to his post after getting his wounds dressed, and persisted on remaining in the line of greatest danger in spite of the entreaties of his men to seek a place of safety. Thus he died as he had lived, faithful to a high and chivalrous sense of duty.

The second name was that of Lieut. Mac Pettigrew. It was his privilege to meet him only once or twice, and that when on leave: but the impression Lieut. Pettigrew made on his mind was that of a wondrous happy young man. He was like a ray of sunlight, and report has it that he was this in the trenches. All his men loved him, and who can measure the worth of such a well-founded character, and singular charm, or speak of the joy in possessing such power to bless? His name is among the blessed, and his memory hallowed. Like a brave man he volunteered for service at the front, was wounded, got better of his wounds, returned to the battle line, and died. The call of duty was to him imperative, and it found him ready.

The third name was that of Sergt. William Jones, a faithful and beloved son. Rev. M. Watkins recalled many visits to his home during the war, and he was reminded of the singular affection he bestowed upon his mother. To her he wrote on every possible occasion, and his letters were full of little sketches of his life in the trenches and in billets. He talked to the last of his next leave, but it never came. The sad news preceded that leave, and he was reported missing.

The fourth name was Private Hugh Hanna. He was the son of a highly-esteemed member of that congregation, and a grandson of one of its foundational members. Although he had gone out to seek for himself a home in the great West-land of Canada, the cry of the

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Mother-country did not fall on deaf ears. He crossed the seas with the Canadian Forces, fought and died for the Home land.

These young men, sleeping their last long sleep in a foreign land, were publicly commemorated by them that day. Let each one then commemorate privately their glorious sacrifice in their lives by striving to realize something of the spirit of the great cause for which they died.

The dedication prayer, which was taken by the minister, was followed with the trumpeters sounding "The Reveille."

Miss Davidson placed a wreath of laurel leaves at the base of the Tablet, and the choir sang "Crossing the Bar" (Barnby).

The Benediction concluded the very impressive service.

The Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., conducted the Special Service that was held in the evening. A large congregation assembled in spite of the inclemency of the weather, and it was amply repaid by the splendid discourse which Mr. Rossington delivered.



All Souls' Church.



WAR MEMORIAL UNVEILED.



A handsome mural tablet erected to the memory of the members of the congregation who fell and who served in the great war was unveiled on November 6th, at the Morning Service, in All Souls' Church, Elmwood Avenue, Belfast, by the Right Hon. J. M. Andrews, Minister of Labour, Northern Ireland. There was a large congregation, and special music was contributed, including the anthem "What are these?" and the singing of "Nearer, my God, to Thee," by Miss Florence M'Watters, Mr. Clement S. Seath presiding at the organ. The tablet, which is of beaten bronze and beautifully designed by Miss Praeger, bears the names of Robert Adair Dickson, Robert M'Calmont Pettigrew, and Norman

Stott, who made the supreme sacrifice, and of the following twenty-eight members of the congregation who served: Dawson Barker, John Campbell, F.R.C.S., Robert Craig, Charles Dickson, M.C.; J. Terence Duffin, M.C. and Bar; Cyril Edwards, Robert Gregg, James Gregg, Montgomery Henderson, James Henderson, Robert Henderson, Thomas Henderson, Ivan M'Caw, Gordon Coffey May, Rupert Griffen Meyer, Edward Moore; James Neill, D.C.M.; Malcolm Knox Nelson; William Hewitt Stitt, D.S.O., M.C.; James Arthur Stitt, M.C.; Robert Campbell, F.R.C.S.; William Rankin, Mary Gamble Dickson, Celia Marion Duffin, Emma Sylvia Duffin, Sylvia Mary Duffin, Nellie Hill and Lorna Pettigrew. The memorial also bears the figure of a pilgrim "pressing onward," symbolising Humanity striving towards the City Beautiful, and the inscription "I press on." Underneath there was placed a beautiful wreath of laurels from the members of the congregation.

Rev. E. H. Pickering, M.A., preached from Paul's Epistle to the Philippians iii. 14—"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ." All through the war, he said, when young lives were being daily mown down in thousands, they felt themselves painfully under an obligation to the young warriors, and he could conceive of no more painful obligation under which a decent-minded human being could be put than that he was alive, because, and strictly because, others had died. In the grateful days immediately following the armistice they admitted their obligation, but that enthusiasm had soon passed, and this land and the whole world had given such an exhibition of greed, cruelty, and immorality that not only their gallant lads, but the whole communion of saints and martyrs and heroes seemed to have died in vain. The salvation of the world depended on the development of that honourable sense of integrity which insisted on paying its debts. He entreated them to let that memorial stand as a symbol of the reformation which they pledged themselves to make in their lives and in the structure of the world.

Mr. Andrews, before unveiling the memorial, said he appreciated very much the honour the minister, the Committee, and members of the congregation paid him in asking him to perform that ceremony. Naturally and necessarily their thoughts centred on those three gallant men belonging to the congregation who volunteered for active service in order to fight for liberty and right, for him and for them, and who, nobly fighting, fell. They owed to those men all the honour they could confer upon their memories, and that day they tried to do something to show their appreciation of the noble sacrifices made for King and country. He felt that in the great moments of life, as had been said, silence was more becoming than words, so he asked them to bow their heads and centre their thoughts for a few seconds with him on those boys and their gallant comrades belonging to other congregations all over the world who, with them, fell. Proceeding after a brief pause, Mr. Andrews said he was glad that the memorial contained the names of those equally gallant men who dedicated their lives to their country's service at their country's call. They could not better show their appreciation of the dead than by doing what they could for the living, their comrades who had returned. It was a blot on the fair name of their city that they had 5,400 men who had fought in the great war—men willing to give their lives for them—walking daily about their streets looking for work they could not find. He knew this country and every other country was passing through a period of commercial depression unequalled in the world's history, but all the same he felt if public opinion was only sufficiently aroused work could be found, and should be found, for those gallant heroes. There were in the city more than one thousand employers, and if each one of them would bring home to himself his duty in this matter the problem would be solved. No one employer could do it, but a united movement could and should be made, and he hoped in God's sight it would be done. He thought the real reason such a movement had not been inaugurated

already was because there were few people who knew how much those men had endured and were enduring at the present time. In his official capacity, and in the course of these duties which he had for the time being the honour of trying to fulfil, dozens of the saddest and most heartrending cases were daily brought to his notice. That was why he said it was time a united effort was made to find work for those men. He thought they should go to them and say, "You saved us in war, we will save you in peace." It was the duty of that congregation and of every congregation throughout the land to arouse, to focus, to rivet public attention on those men, and it was in that hope and in that spirit that he, with all reverence, in the name of the members of that congregation had the honour of unveiling that memorial.

Major J. M. Henderson read the names of those who had fallen, and Mr. John Wilkinson read the names of those who had served and returned.

The "Last Post" was sounded by buglers of the Royal Artillery Mounted Rifles, the memorial was dedicated, the buglers sounded the Reveille, and as the congregation stood with bowed heads the Dead March was expressively played by the organist.

At the Evening Service Mr. Pickering preached his Farewell Sermon to a large congregation, and spoke of the object he had tried to keep before him in his ministry, viz., to reveal Christianity as a matter of helping the weak and of expressing the principle that it was more blessed to give than to receive. The one thing which had lifted his spirits time after time was the thought that, more than anyone else, a minister had the opportunity of helping the weak, and even where he had not silver and gold to give, he was able to experience the joy of giving rather than receiving.



"Whoever you be, be humble,
 Whatever you do, do well;
 Whatever you speak, speak kindly,
 Give joy wherever you dwell."

Obituary.

MR. HUGH M'MECHAN, SEN.,
BALLEE.

On the afternoon of Friday, 14th October, in the quiet country graveyard adjoining the venerable meeting-house in which his forbears and he were wont to worship, there were reverently laid to rest the mortal remains of Mr. Hugh M'Mechan, sen., a prominent member of the Ballee Non-Subscribing congregation, and one deservedly respected and esteemed far beyond the immediate bounds of his own native parish and district.

Regular in his attendance in the sanctuary he loved so well, the Sabbath previous to his fatal illness found him in his accustomed place, a devout worshipper. The mid-week following a sudden influenza attack prostrated him upon a bed of sickness, and in spite of skilful nursing and the best medical attendance procurable, heart failure subsequently set in and he gradually became weaker, until so peaceful was the end that he seemed to gently fall asleep.

A vast concourse, representative of all creeds and classes, gathered together to pay a last tribute of respect to the memory of a truly Christian gentleman, and not for many years has a funeral cortege of such magnitude been seen in the locality. The chief mourners were Captain James M'Mechan, M.C., John, and Hugh (sons) and deceased's only surviving brother John, retired bank manager. Rev. J. H. Bibby conducted services of impressive simplicity in the home, the meeting-house, and the graveside. Those who attended the solemn public service and who knew our departed friend best, felt that never did minister more fittingly speak of a worthily lived life at its earthly close.

The Ballee congregation is to-day inestimably poorer by the loss of a just and faithful friend, a wise counsellor, and an ever ready and willing helper in all tending to make for the healthy well-

being of a church. To the several members of the sorrowing family, and all relatives, respectful sympathy is extended, and the prayers of their fellow worshippers are offered for divine consolation and healing in their hour of bereavement.

* * *

WILLIAM HAY.

With profound regret we announce the death of Mr. William Hay, of Lodge Hill, Clough, on Tuesday, October 18th, in his 88th year, leaving two daughters—Miss Hay, of Salthill, Galway, and Mrs. M'Cauley, Rathfriland, and a daughter-in-law, Mrs. Hay, of Lodge Hill, and grandchildren to mourn their loss.

The deceased had lived all his life in Lodge Hill, where his exemplary ways had won for him the love and confidence of a wide circle of friends. He was revered as one of the "fathers" of Clough Church. He was the oldest elder and member, who, during his long life, did a vast amount of work, in various capacities, on behalf of the congregation. No one knew the history of Clough Church and the families connected therewith better than he, nor could anyone in the district give a sounder and more lucid account of the stirring incidents connected with the local "split," for as a young man he had known the principal actors in that drama. Throughout the vicissitudes and changes which beset the Church, Mr. Hay remained a thorough Unitarian and was proud of the name. He was strong in body, mind and spirit, broadminded, genial and of a kindly heart. In every way and in all things he was mindful of his high calling in Christ Jesus.

His remains were laid to rest on the following Thursday in Clough Church graveyard, and at the funeral, which was unusually large, were representatives of every class and creed from far and near. Rev. J. D. Davies officiated, assisted by Rev. R. Philipson, Downpatrick, and Rev. Kilpatrick, Rathfriland; Rev. J. Craig, Killyleagh, was also present.

Can We Rely on Nature?

It is reported of Margaret Fuller that she said she accepted the universe. "Gad she'd better!" retorted Carlyle. Carlyle himself did not accept the universe in a very whole-hearted manner. Looking up at the midnight stars, he exclaimed: "A sad spectacle! If they be inhabited, what a scope for misery and folly; if they be na inhabited, what a waste of space!"

It seems a pity to go through life with a suspicion in one's mind that it might have been a better universe, and that some wrong has been done us because we have no freedom of choice in the matter. Such a thought would add a tinge of bitterness to all our days. Such probably was Omar Khayyam's feeling, when he says—

"Could you and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!"

The heart of Nature is sound Modern feeling towards our great Mother, is like the feeling a man has who takes out a policy in an insurance company: he believes the company is solvent and will meet its obligations: so Nature is solvent and worthy of our trust. Theological or church creeds do not count for much in our day. We want nothing less than a faith founded upon a rock—faith in the constitution of things. The various man-made creeds are fictitious, like the constellations—Orion, The Plough or Cassiopeia's Chair; the only thing real in them is the stars, and the only thing real in the creeds is the soul's aspiration toward the Infinite. This abides, though creeds and dogmas change or vanish. Human life demands a natural explanation of all phenomena upon this earth, but the word "natural" implies more than mere chemistry and physics. The birth of a baby, and the blooming of a flower, are natural events, but the laboratory methods for ever fail to give us the key to the secret of either. The key is the Wordsworthian sense in nature of "something far more deeply interfused" than the principles of exact science. Without the emotion of the beautiful, the sublime, the mysterious, there is no art, no religion, no literature. How to get from the clod underfoot to the brain and consciousness of man without invoking something out-

side of, and superior to, natural laws, is the great question; for science is past teaching us that the universe is complete in itself. You remember Tyndall's poetical statement—"the mystery and the miracle of vitality"—modern thought tells us that "some unknown, and doubtless unknowable tendency or power, is in the elements themselves—a kind of universal mind pervading living matter and the reason of its living, through which the whole drama of evolution is brought about." We are forced to confess with the philosophers of all ages that—

"We are such stuff as dreams are made on,
And our little life is rounded with a sleep."

The change of man's attitude toward Nature is one of the most, if not *the* most, remarkable changes in his mental and spiritual story in modern times. It amounts to a Revolution. The fields, the woods, the waters, the starry night have an attraction and a new religious meaning to the modern mind arising from "having felt in them a Presence that disturbs us with the joy of elevated thoughts, and a Spirit rolling through all things." The meanest flower that blows gives us thoughts that lie too deep for tears. Nature has grown clearer and satisfies our Infinite aspirations better than most of the theological creeds. The gulf between the church and the sky is simply the space between the orthodox creed and Nature. Sooner or later, if one would not be divided against himself, he must face this question of Nature—of the cosmos as a whole. Is it of God, or of the Devil, or of both? Pious souls seem long to have held that it is of both, that the more genial aspects of Nature—birds, flowers, streams, stars, sunsets, fair prospects—were of God, and that Nature's destructive, terrifying aspects and forces—storms, earthquakes, pestilence, wars—were of the Devil. Men have rarely had the courage to say that it is *all* of God, that it is all divine; that the cyclone, the volcanoes, the earthquakes, are as truly of God as are the forms and forces that directly please and minister to us. Modern religious thought identifies God with universal Nature in *all* her multiform beneficent and malevolent aspects.

Nature's dealings with man and with the other forms of life are on the same plan as her dealings with the earth as a whole. We think we could improve the

weather. So we might for our special purposes at times—when it rains and we have hay down, or a crop to put in, or a picnic in view; but it is better on the whole that we adapt ourselves to the weather than that the weather be adapted to the special needs of each of us.

There will be times when the light will blind the eye; other times when the darkness will heal and restore it; times when the heat will burn the hand, when the food will poison the stomach, when the friend will weary you, when even home is a prison. It is our relations to things make them good or bad. In a world without the gravity which so often crushes us, we could not walk or li't the hand; without the water that could so easily drown us, the currents of our bodies would dry up; without the germs that so often make war upon us, we should soon cease to be. Both friendly and hostile are the powers that surround us,—or rather The Power that surrounds us, for He is One, not two,—friendly when we are in the relation to Him demanded and provided for by our constitution, and unfriendly when we are in false relation to Him. To know this true religion from the false is the discipline of life and the essence of Christian teaching.

"God of the granite and the rose,
Soul of the sparrow and the bee,
Thy mighty tide of Being flows
Through every channel back to Thee:
Through earthquake, war, through birds and
flowers,
Through man evolving Christ-like Power."

G. V. C.



Appearances.

Sitting by the window of a fast travelling train, have you ever noticed the soaring telegraph wires being snatched down by the telegraph poles? This is very curious, because when we are at rest we see the wires sagging down between the poles and would therefore expect that motion would produce the effect of making the poles seem to push the wires up! Both these statements can be verified by anyone who will take the trouble to observe for themselves, and form a striking illustration of how deceptive appearances may be. Yet how many of us dare to form judgments when we only know half of a case. The French have a charitable proverb, which may be translated, "When all is known, all is

forgiven," and if people always acted up to that the world would be a deal happier. But there are people who go about always on the *qui vive* for slights and insults—"looking for trouble," as we say—and who will twist the most innocent remarks into inuendos against themselves or their friends.

A story is told of one of our ministers who was not in the humour for sermon-writing one week. He is a conscientious sort of man and set himself steadfastly to produce something. Inspiration, however, refused to come; but he stuck at it, and by Friday had written sufficient to occupy the allotted time.

On the Saturday evening, as his custom was, he went through his sermon for the following day, but was so utterly displeased with what he had written that he decided he could not possibly preach it on the morrow. What was to be done? It was late on Saturday night, there was no time to write anything else, even if he had been in the mood. So in despair he turned up a volume of —'s printed sermons and decided one of those would have to serve his turn. He pored it here; he pruned it there; he patched it; he cobbled it, and finally he got it into what he considered the right shape, and what is more, he delivered it on the Sunday without any indication that it was not his own work.

On his way home after service, he overtook one of his hearers, a plain, blunt, outspoken farmer, who said to him,

"I did not approve of that sermon of yours this morning!"

"Oh," replied the minister mildly, "What did you object to in it?"

"I never did approve of any minister preaching a sermon against an individual member of his congregation," was the unexpected answer.

Some points in the sermon had evidently gone home! The minister could not, of course, put up the defence that it was not original. He could only smile to himself and think how dreadfully it was being misjudged. To one of his hearers at least it appeared to have been directed against some special person, when the words that had been used were written by one who neither knew, nor cared, about that particular person's existence.

NOBODY.

Lesson Notes.

[In accordance with the Scheme for 1921, prepared by the Sunday School Committee of the N.S.P.C.I.]

December 4th.—Hagar and Ishmael.
Read Genesis xxi. 9-20. *Key Text*,
Genesis xxi. 18.

General Note.—Like many a young man of our own day, Abraham had been called to leave his native land and all his old associates. He had felt that there was that in him which encouraged the belief that God would enable him to work out a goodly destiny. In doing so, he shewed great faith, for he set out, not knowing whither he went, trusting to God to direct him and to show him in due course a place to sojourn in and in which to take up his permanent abode. The great desire of his heart was to have a son, for he was ambitious of making a great name for himself, as the patriarch of a nation. Yet, so the legend goes, years and years pass by, and still Abraham and Sarah continued childless. But when most would have lost all hope, Abraham still had faith. At last, despairing for herself, Sarah, in accordance with what was considered lawful in those days, allowed her husband to take Hagar, her slave, for a kind of secondary wife, and she had a child called Ishmael. Afterwards Sarah herself gave birth to a child, and he was called Isaac.

vv. 9, 10. *Mocking*—"making fun" of Isaac, as we might say. This is the meaning which Saint Paul evidently found in the Hebrew. Isaac's mother would not unnaturally be offended at such impertinence towards her son, and she would quite naturally hold Ishmael's mother to blame for permitting it. Possibly the Hebrew means no more than that Sarah saw the son of Hagar playing. In that case Sarah's conduct would be natural perhaps, but not so well justified. It would simply arise in that case from dislike for poor Ishmael out of jealous regard for Isaac, her own little boy. Any way, she would not consent to Ishmael being recognised as a son of Abraham, although he was actually Isaac's step-brother.

v. 13. *Thy seed* is a quaint expression, but at the same time a beautiful recognition of the truth that we grow up as plants do from the seed of parent plants. (*For elder scholars.*—The seed of flowering plants have both a father and a mother. Often fathers and mothers are parts of the same plant; but sometimes there are fathers only on one plant and mothers only on another.)

v. 14. The article called a *bottle* would be formed of the skin of a goat or a kid, sewn up so as to shew pretty much the form of the living animal, but without its head. Beersheba was near the southern border of the land of Canaan, far from the home of Abraham.

Observations.—This story of Hagar and Ishmael illustrates various truths concerning the dealings of God with men. Especially two things:—

(a) Although human beings are often unjust or unfair or unmerciful to each other so that one would seem to have the power and the will to ruin another, the evil plight of the latter is not overlooked by the Almighty (*e.g.*, The Pilgrim Fathers).

(b) When one is in great straits, and seems to be at the end of one's resources, one's eyes are often opened to some unexpected help or some solution of the difficulty (*e.g.*, Robert Bruce).

Conclusion.—That so long as we have life we are to put forth what effort we may to help ourselves—so long as we are alive—to have faith in ourselves and *faith in God*.

December 11th. Abraham's Sacrifice.
Read Genesis xxii. 1-19. *Key Text*,
I. Cor. x. 13.

General Note.—If "the thing was grievous in Abraham's sight on account of his son," namely, that he should be asked by Sarah, his wife, to cast out Ishmael, so that he would become lost to him, it may well be imagined that it would be a far more grievous trial to him to lose his other son, Isaac, the son of Sarah, on whom was founded the hope of his ambition to build up a family and nation. Yet, according to the legend, his willingness to part with Isaac, supposing it to be demanded

by the will of God, was actually to be put to the test, and that it was not found wanting, constitutes him a most noble example of a man of faith. How many of us would be willing to profess our faith in God so long as we saw the working out of our heart's desire, because we should see in that the evidence of God's faithfulness to us! But how many of us would preserve our faith and persevere in faithfulness to God, if, like Abraham, we saw everything turning out adversely for our dearest wish, with the loss of that which for the time being seemed all that could make life worth living? We may well be shocked at first hearing that it could enter into the thought of Abraham that God could demand his son Isaac for a burnt offering. But several points should be borne in mind in that connection:—(a) It was not all at once, but by degrees, that men discovered the character of the Almighty to be that of the "heavenly Father"; (b) sacrifices of precious belongings were often made in ancient times under the belief that God's favour and mercy, dependent upon His satisfaction with the worshipper, could only be expected if the worshipper were willing to make such sacrifice; (c) in accordance with such belief, human sacrifices, the victim being sometimes the nearest and dearest relative of the worshipper, were offered up by other peoples long after the Hebrews had gained enough spiritual enlightenment to discontinue them; (d) it is to be considered to the credit of Abraham, on the one hand, that he was ready to give up the son who was so precious to him, and therewith all his hopes (as if he were saying to God, "Not my will, but Thine, be done"), and an honour to him, on the other, that through the revelation granted to him the world was to obtain the truer conception of the divine goodness.

The reticence, but feeling of the narrator.—Although the writer does not enlarge upon the feelings of the father and son, he clearly and sympathetically indicates them here and there:—(a) v. 2—not simply—"Take thy son," but "thy son, thine only son [thy son] whom thou lovest [so much]. (b) vv. 7, 8—not simply—

"Father" and "Son," but (more affectionately) "My Father," "My son." (c) vv. 6, 8—twice over, impressively (as if in solemn anticipation of the time that Abraham must be prepared for, when he himself would be going alone) *they went both of them together.* (d) v. 8. The answer of Abraham shows how he painfully postpones as long as possible the dreadful truth he has in store for Isaac.

Concluding Note.—Comparable with the faith of Abraham is that of another Bible hero, viz., Job, who, on hearing of the sudden death of his seven sons and three daughters, besides the loss of all his possessions, said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

December 18th. Review.

December 25th. (Christmas Lesson). *The Angels' Song.* Read Luke ii. 8-20 *Key Text,* Luke ii. 14.

General Note.—According to the first Gospel and the third, Jesus was born at Bethlehem in Judea, though there are differences in other respects in the story of the nativity as given by the two. According to Luke, his parents were on a journey, and arrived at Bethlehem the night that Jesus was born; and as there was no proper room for them in the inn (or rather *caravanserai*, or public resting-place provided for the convenience of travellers), at which they wished to pass the night, they laid the new-born infant in a manger.

v. 11. King David was also a native of Bethlehem; and, although there is much reason to think there was no true record of the descent of Jesus from his ancestors, not long after his death, and possibly by some people during his life-time, it came to be believed that he was a descendant in the direct line from David. (*For elder scholars.*—The term Saviour, as applied to Jesus by the angel, is perhaps somewhat vague in its intended significance. The appellations of *Saviour* and *Lord*, as applied to Jesus in this verse, together with the reference to good tidings in the verse before, are comparable with

the language of some Greek inscriptions dating from a few years before the birth of Jesus, and referring to Augustus, the nephew of Julius Cæsar and first Roman Emperor, in the following terms:—"The birthday of the god (*i.e.*, Augustus!) is become the beginning of glad tidings through him to the world," . . . "The Saviour of the human race.") Whatever may have been the meaning belonging to the term *Saviour*, as originally intended in this verse, it has come to be associated with the idea of Jesus as a Saviour of men from the dominion of sin.

Christ is the Greek term for the Hebrew *Messiah*—anointed, and here denotes that Jesus was charged with a special divine commission—first to the people of Israel, and secondly to the whole world.

Lord signifies that Jesus is appointed to have authority among men.

v. 12. *A sign* that the angel was not a mere hallucination or his words a delusion. That the new-born infant would turn out all that the angel predicted could not be verified for the present; but the truth of the other statement—that he was lying in the manger—the shepherds could put themselves in a position to verify at once, and, finding that much true, they would naturally be prepared to take the rest for truth likewise.

Christmas Day (25th December) is the day that was chosen long ago (4th century) for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. The actual date of his birth had been irrecoverably forgotten. Actually it must be considered most improbable that shepherds near Bethlehem would have kept their flocks in the fields all night at that time of year. But the exact date, much as we might wish to know it, is not of much importance. It is well enough to commemorate the glad tidings of the nativity year by year, and it is well to have a particular day for the purpose fixed by general consent.

The Legend.—Nowadays there are not many people who feel able to take the story of the angel and the shepherds for anything more substantially true than a legend. But to call it a legend

does not imply that it is of no value, or even that it is devoid of all truth. On the contrary, it is most valuable as proving the truth of the act that there were at the time that the Gospel was written (at least as early as 100 A.D., if not, as in the opinion of some first-rate scholars, as early as 80 A.D.), and probably before that date, as it is not likely that the evangelist himself originated the legend, that at that comparatively early date, long before the Christian religion had begun to gain much ground, and whilst its adherents were acquainted with abundant tribulations at the hands of a hostile world, there were already many Christians who not merely found in Jesus a Saviour for themselves, but confidently believed that in due course he would be recognised as a Saviour for the world at large—a *very notable fact* (when one considers it) that they should have held that belief in the circumstances of their generation.

Rev. Eustace Thompson.



A Monument to a Bird.

North Dakota this summer was saved from a plague of locusts by the coming of sea gulls which destroyed the insects before they had done much damage. In 1848, Utah was similarly visited, and as a token of appreciation, the State authorities erected a monument to this bird. It is situated in the Temple grounds in Salt Lake City. On a pillar 100 feet high stands a large sea gull in bronze. Inscriptions set forth that the crops of the Mormons were being laid waste by locusts when the sea gulls, "messengers from heaven," appeared and destroyed the insects, thus saving the people from starvation that winter.

Work no less important is being done by birds everywhere without attracting much attention. Without birds, farmers would be unable to harvest half their crops. An eminent ornithologist once expressed the opinion that were it not for the check on the spread of insects by the birds, the earth in a few years would not be habitable for man.

AMERICAN PAPER.

Reports.

The Unity Guild.—The Opening Social in connection with the Unity Guild took place on Wednesday, October 12th, in the Central Hall, and proved in every way a great success. The President and Mrs. Rossington welcomed the members on their arrival. The first part of the programme, an Irish Town Tea, was proceeded with, and much enthusiasm was shown in guessing the Towns represented by the different badges which were worn, many of which were original. The book prizes were awarded to Miss Allen and Mr. Mitchell for guessing the highest number correctly. An hour's dancing brought the evening to a close.

On Saturday, October 22nd, the Guild Entertainment for the Blind took place in the Central Hall, 80 workers from the Workshops for Industrious Blind being invited. Previous to Tea the guests entertained themselves with a varied programme contributed by some of their own party. Tea, which was a sumptuous repast, was served at 5-45, and was followed by an excellent programme from Guild members and friends, in which the following kindly took part:—Madame Ellie Duff, Mrs. Braithwaite, Mrs. Robin, Miss Anderson and the Misses Annie Newman, Nellie Gordon, and Mildred Martin, Rev. M. Watkins, Mr. Alex. Hunter and the Domestic Mission Choir, Mr. J. H. Smith acting as accompanist. A liberal supply of fruit and cakes was handed round after the programme, and the guests expressed themselves as being highly delighted with the entertainment.

Ladies' Night was held on Wednesday, November 9th, in York Street Hall, when extremely interesting papers were given by Mrs. H. J. Rossington, B.A., and Miss Greenfield, the former taking for her subject the "Supernatural in Shakespeare," and the latter, "Notes on Life in a Country Town." The papers were listened to attentively by an appreciative audience. On the motion of Mr. W. Greenfield, seconded by Mr. Osborne, a vote of thanks was passed on Mrs.

Rossington, and the Rev. H. J. Rossington moved, and Mrs. Robinson seconded, a vote of thanks to Miss Greenfield. Tea was provided after the papers and a sociable half an hour spent in friendly conversation.

* *

Ballee.—We speak sometimes of the bludgeonings of fate. Public sympathy in a special degree is felt with Mr. Hugh Crymble, ex-schoolmaster of Ballee, one of the most respected citizens of Lecale. He educated three sons for the medical profession. The second son, Marshall, is practising in Manchester. The eldest, William, died on war service abroad. The youngest, Harry, who qualified only this year, was laid to rest on 9th November in Ballee Meeting-house churchyard, a victim of typhoid. And it is just a month ago since Mr. Crymble was bereaved of his wife.

* *

Ballycarry.—The Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held on the 3rd Sunday in October. The preacher at the Morning Service was the Minister. In the evening the pulpit was occupied by the Rev. D. J. Williams, of Killinchy, who delivered an eloquent sermon, which was listened to with great interest and appreciation by an overflowing congregation. The choir rendered two anthems most effectively, the very able Organist being Mr. Campbell, of Ailsa Craig, Whitehead. This was the first occasion upon which the pulpit (a fine and massive piece of the cabinet makers' art, originally belonging to the Carrickfergus Church and presented by Mr. Thomas Feeny to the Minister of Ballycarry), was used. The Church has just been re-decorated, and its appearance gives great satisfaction to the congregation.

* *

Belfast: Second Congregation (All Souls').—On Saturday, November 5th, a social gathering was held in the Rosemary Hall, at which appreciation of the services of the Rev. E. H. Pickering and Mrs. Pickering was demonstrated by the presentation to them and their young son of generous farewell gifts. Mr. J. M. Dickson pre-

sided over a good attendance of members and outside friends, and he made fitting reference to the object of the gathering and voiced their regret at parting with their minister and his wife and son, while wishing them all success and happiness in their new sphere of work at Southport. Miss Campbell in a felicitous speech presented Mrs. Pickering with a handsome silver tea service, while Miss Montgomery was equally happy in making Master Denis the recipient of a box of meccano and a pocket knife. Mr. Adam Millin and Mr. J. E. Barker bore witness to the value of Mr. Pickering's work and to the worth of his genial personality, while the Rev. H. J. Rossington emphasised the manner in which Mr. Pickering had co-operated in the work of the Non-Subscribing Church. Mr. Pickering was presented with a wallet containing a cheque for a substantial sum. He and Mrs. Pickering expressed their gratitude for the gifts and testified to the kindness and generosity of their All Souls' friends, whom they would ever remember and be glad to re-visit. Tea was served and a musical programme submitted, making a very pleasant conclusion to a successful and enjoyable gathering.

* *

Belfast: Domestic Mission.—The Third Anniversary of the signing of the Armistice was celebrated on Sunday evening, November 13th. The large congregation assembled entered fully into the spirit of the service, i.e., Thanksgiving and Dedication. The Memorial Tablet was draped with a Union Jack and the Roll of Honour placed immediately below on a table decorated with white flowers. While the congregation remained standing, a wreath of laurels was presented by the Missionary to the ex-Service men, wearing war decorations, who were formed up in front of the Memorial, in memory of all fallen comrades. Suitable sentences were read and prayers offered, followed by an interval of silent prayer. After the lesson, chosen from Revelation vii. 9-17, a fitting tribute was paid to the memory of the fallen, in the course of which

reference was made to the cause for which they so nobly and voluntarily gave their lives, pointing out that that cause is in our hands now and we must see to it that a happier and saner world is built on the foundations made for ever sacred by that great sacrifice. If we fail in this, then that sacrifice will have been in vain.

"And that's not done by sword, or tongue, or pen;
There's but one way. God make us better men."

On the following morning the laurel wreath was placed on the steps of the Cenotaph at the City Hall, having a card attached, suitably inscribed. It is encouraging to report that our attendances at services are steadily increasing and that the various week-night agencies have been most enthusiastically and successfully entered into by those for whose moral and spiritual uplift they are conducted.

* *

Clough.—The Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held on Friday evening and Sunday, October 7th and 9th. The church was beautifully decorated by the ladies of the congregation, assisted by some of the young men. Gifts of flowers, fruit, vegetables and grain were kindly sent by various members, and conspicuous among the offerings was a gigantic pumpkin presented by Mr. Allen, Mountpanther. Friday evening service was conducted by the Rev. A. M. Bell, B.A., of Ballyclare, whose excellent sermon was greatly appreciated. Sunday services were conducted by Rev. J. D. Davies. Solos were rendered by Miss Irvine, Mrs. John M'Cammon, and Rev. J. D. Davies. The services were attended by large congregations. Miss L. Irvine presided at the organ.

* *

Comber.—The first Social Evening of the Session of the Young People's Society was held in the Schoolroom on Wednesday evening, November 9th. There was a very satisfactory attendance. Two competitions were held, the winners being Miss Mary Osborne and Miss Edith Todd. Mr. Robert Ferguson and Master Jack Irwin. Solos were rendered by Miss Semple and Rev. J. G. Davies. Mrs. Hutchinson, of Belfast, delighted

the company with several humorous recitations. Mrs. Robert Ferguson played the accompaniments, and Miss Eva Andrews and Miss Rachel Todd supplied the dance music. The evening was greatly enjoyed by all present, and it was felt that the Society has made a good start on its third session.

* *

Grey Abbey.—In spite of rain, which increased as the day advanced, there was an attendance of some 150 at the Opening of the New Organ on November 13th. The congregation was gathered in from the neighbouring churches, including Ballyhemlin, Newtownards and Comber, while even some Belfast friends showed their interest in our efforts by their presence. All were delighted with the dedication sermon which the Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., delivered, and with the Solo so tastefully rendered by Mrs. Jas. Moore, of Belfast. We are greatly indebted to the Rev. R. M. King, who has given such valuable advice about the organ, and who presided at the instrument on this occasion, and to the Rev. J. G. Davies, who kindly helped in the Choir. The organ is a sweet-toned instrument, and should prove the greatest assistance to worship. The church buildings have been re-decorated and re-lighted throughout and reflect great credit on those who were responsible for the work. The renovation of the Manse is being actively proceeded with, and our best thanks are due to all those friends who so generously helped us to this consummation of our desires at the recent bazaar.

* *

Hollywood.—The annual Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held on Sunday, 30th October, the pulpit being occupied by Rev. Edgar Lockett. The congregation at the morning service was fairly representative of our own members, but the evening service was attended by a great number of members from all the other churches, the accommodation being fully taxed fifteen minutes before the usual time of starting, and forms had to be placed in the aisles for late comers. The Services were continued on Monday evening, when an augmented choir rendered a cantata suitable to the occasion, entitled "A

Joyful Thanksgiving," by Caleb Simper, the soloists being Miss E. Sparrow, Mrs. M. A. Robin, Mr. J. Shannon, and Mr. J. Hill. A short address was given by the Minister.

* *

Laymen's League.—The Monthly Meeting of Belfast Chapter was held in Mountpottinger Schoolroom, on Wednesday evening, 16th November, Mr. C. J. M'Kisack in the chair. Dr. John Campbell gave a very lucid and interesting address on the History of our Churches. He traced the difficulties of the Churches largely to the falling away from the teachings of the Gospels, in the formation of creeds and parties, which inevitably led to controversies and divisions. The Roman Catholic Church had been the prime mover here, but Protestantism under Luther and Calvin were equally guilty. The Liberal movement with which our Churches in Ulster were identified came early into Scotland probably from Waldensian sources. We were more influenced by the early Scottish Confession of Faith than by that of Westminster; it was more human, less theologically definite. The early partisans of Non-Subscription in Ireland refused to bind themselves absolutely to the formulas of the later standard, and here the conflict began which, carried on through Drs. Cooke and Montgomery, has resulted in the formation of the Non-Subscribing Church in Ulster. A very interesting discussion took place, in which the Chairman, Messrs. Greenfield, Allen, Robinson, Blair and Henderson joined. It was decided to hold the next meeting in York Street Schoolroom, on Thursday 15th December.

* *

Larne.—We understand that one name was inadvertently left off the Memorial slab erected recently in Larne Church to the memory of the members who fell in the Great War, viz., that of "Thomas Cook, R.I.R." The name was duly recorded on the monument before the Sunday following.

* *

Mountpottinger.—The work of re-decorating Church and School-room referred to in our last issue has now been completed, and the result is very

pleasing to all concerned. Opportunity has also been taken to improve the heating arrangements by installing gas steam radiators which seem likely to prove most suitable. Another feature which makes for distinct improvement is the wooden screen which has been erected to the left of the pulpit, thus making the Church seem more complete. The whole erection has been done by Mr. J. M'Ilwrath, a very interested member of the congregation, with the able assistance of the Minister, who, of course, is no amateur in matters appertaining to the art of carpentry. Mention should also be made of the interest taken by our Minister in the work of renovation as a whole, which has been exceedingly great, and we are very appreciative of his labours in this direction, as also to Messrs. E. Mitchell and T. Patton, who very generously gave of their skilled services in connection with the work being done. To the band of ladies who assisted in the work of putting straight after the workmen had finished and generally making the Church and School-room comfortable, the Committee tender their warmest thanks.

* *

Raloo.—Harvest Services were held in above Church, on Sunday, 30th October. at 12 noon and 7 o'clock p.m. The Church was tastefully decorated by the Teachers and Sunday School Scholars. Rev. R. Philipson, B.A., of Downpatrick, delivered interesting and inspiring sermons, appropriate to the harvest season. The solos, "He shall feed His Flock," "My Task," and "Oh, Rest in the Lord," were effectively rendered by Miss J. Sterling, Belfast. The Harvest Hymns were heartily sung by an augmented choir, Mrs. A. Moore presiding at the organ. Owing to the weather proving favourable, the congregations were exceptionally large, especially at the Evening Service, when large numbers had to turn away.

* *

Union for Social Service.—A public meeting of the above Society was held in the Minor Hall, Rosemary Street, on Wednesday, October 26th, at 7-30 p.m. The Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., took the chair and introduced the

speaker, Professor H. O. Meridith, M.A., M.com., of Queen's University, whose subject was "Unemployment." The speaker started out by saying he knew nothing about the subject, and then proceeded to unfold some most interesting references as to cause and effect, and subsequently outlined two quite original ideas for organisations by which the terrible bogey of Unemployment could be exorcised. Messrs. Brown, Leyland and Fieldhouse took part in the discussion which followed, and Mr. Hugh Erskine proposed and Mr. J. H. Gilliland seconded a hearty vote of thanks to Professor Meridith.



Church Organisation.

A "Headmaster," writing in a recent issue of the *Hibbert Journal*, gives some account of an examination in Religious Knowledge which was sprung upon a whole school without time for preparation. Some of the answers are given, and these together with a chance remark let fall by one of our laymen has suggested that if put through a similar test on their Church organisation, our people might not come off any better. How many could do the following simple paper "without a soul upon the spot to prompt" them?

1. Give the official title of our Church and name its present Moderator.
2. Give the official titles of those groups of congregations usually referred to as (a) the Remonstrant Synod; (b) the Non-Subscribing Association; (c) name the present Chairman and Secretary of each, and give his official title.
3. Which of the following groups governs the largest number of congregations: (a) the General Synod; (b) Remonstrant Synod; (c) Non-Subscribing Association. Which is the oldest?
4. What is "Non-Subscribing" Presbyterianism?
5. Name the Presbytery to which *you* belong, and its Moderator and Clerk.
6. Give the official title of the congregation to which *you* belong.



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